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THE POPE & THE GOSPEL

BY

J. J. MAURETTE

45. 626.



THE POPE AND THE GOSPEL,

OR ANOTHER

FAREWELL TO ROME.

BY

J. J. MAURETTE,

LATE PARISH PRIEST OF SERRES, DEPARTMENT OF
THE ARIEGE, IN FRANCE, NOW MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

"He, who would arrive at the true faith, must seek it in the Holy Scriptures alone."—*Hilary, Bp. of Poitiers ad Const. Imper.*

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."—*1. Thess. v. 21.*

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P R E F A C E.

THE present pamphlet was preceded in France by one entitled *My Farewell to Rome*, written by Monsieur Bruitte, another parish-priest, who, with an aged mother, and a sister, dependant upon him for their bread, had suffered the loss of all things for the faith of Christ; left his living, and Rome; and cast himself upon God's promises. Monsieur Maurette, who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth before Monsieur Bruitte, took up his pen upon the publication of the *First Farewell*, to confirm and strengthen its effect by *another*. A *third*, by a third converted priest, is to appear in a few

days, or has appeared by this time. Each of these three gentlemen is well known to many of the friends of the Gospel in France and Switzerland, who would at any time be willing to bear testimony to them ; if their faith, and what they have suffered for the Gospel's sake, were not sufficient witnesses in their behalf.

This *Second Farewell*, like its predecessor, met with a ready sale on its publication, and as many as eight thousand copies had been put into circulation, when the remainder were seized by direction of the French government, and an order issued for the arrest of the author, who, as it happened, was then absent from home, and preaching the faith of Christ in the department of the Var, in the south-eastern extremity of France. Just at this time occurred the discussion in the French chambers on the question of religious liberty. The Keeper of the Seals, grounding what he said on Monsieur Maurette's absence, declared that he had fled from the pursuit of justice. As soon as Monsieur Maurette

became aware of this, he wrote immediately to contradict it, returned, and appeared on the 17th of last May before the Court of Assize at Foix. He was there arraigned on three counts, and charged:—

1st. With outrage and derision against a religion whose establishment is legally recognised in France.

2nd. With having sought to disturb the public peace.

3rd. With promoting enmity among the different classes of society.

The two last charges were rejected by the jury, but he was condemned on the first to a fine of 600 francs, (£24,) and one year's imprisonment. Against this decision he afterwards appealed to a superior tribunal, the Cour de Cassation, in Paris. The judgment of the inferior court was there confirmed, and Monsieur Maurette is now suffering the imprisonment to which he was condemned.

The translator has thought it might be useful

to make these things known in England ;—1st. That English Christians may be thankful for their greater liberty, and may pray for their brethren in the faith in France : 2ndly. That at this season, so critical to our dear native land, when many think and speak favourably of Rome, she might be once more exhibited (and that by the voice of one who has been in the midst of her, and knows her well,) as the invariable adversary of the Gospel of God's grace. Lastly, that if, among the clergy and the people of the Church of England, a few are turning their backs on the open Bible, to throw themselves into that which the Bible openly condemns, it might be more generally known than it is, that in France the knowledge of the Scriptures is beginning to be more and more appreciated ; so that, in one instance, not a few individuals only, but a whole parish, and in other cases, large parts of parishes, have come out of Rome, and welcomed those who brought them the doctrines of Christ and his apostles.

The translator would urge those who feel an interest in the progress of scriptural faith in France, to consult the reports and quarterly papers of the Foreign Aid Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and, if they have the opportunity, those of the Sociétés Evangéliques of France and Geneva.

December 1, 1844.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

A REFLECTING Christian has said,
“ Be not deceived by certain appearances. The community cannot be indifferent to the opinions of its members ; it feels a desire to know the real motives that govern their actions. The community wants to know the conscience of the individual.”*

I am but a simple and obscure individual ; but having arrived at a very strong conviction, I think it right to make it known. A debt is not the less a debt for being a small one. I come forward therefore to discharge mine, to lay open my thoughts and my conscience, and to relate the conclusions to which this conscience has led me. God grant that these reflections may be the

* See Vinet, manifestation of religious convictions.

means of enlightening some of those into whose hands these simple pages may fall !

All that relates to myself may be reduced to this double declaration, viz. **I SEPARATE MYSELF FROM THE POPE, TO ATTACH MYSELF TO JESUS CHRIST !**

I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Clement, Bishop of Rome, who died A.D. 81 :

“ Jesus Christ is with the humble only ; He is not with those who exalt themselves above his flock. Our Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding his power, came not into the world in pomp and pride.”*

I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Ignatius, Martyr, Bishop of Antioch, A.D. 108 :

“ Whoever blindly follows those, who wander from the way of truth, shall not inherit the kingdom of God ; and whoever is able to distinguish truth from error, but does not make use of this faculty, and abandon a teacher of lies, God will punish.”†

I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Justin, Martyr, A.D. 163 :

* Epist. to Rom. xvi.

† St. Ignatius, Epist. to Philadelphians and Ephes.

“ He who is truly pious and wise, will value the truth which he has been led to discover above all things ; and reject the opinions of the ancients, (*majorum opiniones*,) as soon as he perceives the falsity of them.”*

“ I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, A.D. 258 :

“ Neither ought any bishop in the world, to pretend to be a bishop of bishops, nor to exercise any constraint over the faith and actions of his colleagues by threats or punishment (*tyrannico terrore*) ; for every bishop has full liberty, and may use his spiritual power according to his own convictions ; and if he does so, he ought no more to be judged by another than to judge other bishops himself.”†

I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, A.D. 369 :

“ Because of that Antichrist, you do wrong to attach importance to the walls of temples, to regard a building as the Church of God, or to repeat the name of peace under their roofs. Is it then doubtful that Antichrist may not establish

* First apology, chap. iii.

† In prolog. Concil. Carthag. de catiz. hæret.

his throne there? the mountain, the forest, the lake, the prison, and the cave, are to me safer places.”*

“ I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea, A.D. 379 :

“ Let us compare the discourses and writings of our teachers with the doctrines of the Bible, and accept only that which is conformable to the scriptures.”†

I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Ambrose Bishop of Milan, A.D. 397 :

“ The Lord has forbidden us to call any man master in matters of religion, because we have only one master, Jesus Christ the anointed one, who is always ready to enlighten our understandings, if we shut not out his light from our souls.‡ Our faith in the church, (i. e. in its visible heads,) must be tried by the declarations of scripture, and we must admit the church as our guide, only when it can be proved that Christ dwelleth in her.”§

I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Jerome, A. D. 420 :

“ Bishops are all equal amongst themselves; let no one imagine that the church of Rome dif-

* Lib. Contra Auxent. 12.

† In ascet. def. 72.

‡ Sermon 8 on Psalm cxviii. 8.

§ Amb. in Luc. vi. 9

fers essentially from any other church in the world: the Gauls, the Britons, the Africans, the Persians, the Indians, and the whole earth, in a word, all christian nations acknowledge the same Jesus Christ for their common Saviour, and have the same rule of faith, viz. the Bible. Whether a man be a bishop of the great city of Rome, or of the small town of Egubium, of insignificant Rhegium, or of despised Tanis, is of little importance; the merit and the dignity are the same. Riches and power, poverty and lowliness, neither exalt a bishop nor disgrace him.”*

“ I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with St. Augustine, A. D. 430 :

“ If disputes arise in the church, who shall be the arbitrator? none but Christ and the apostles, that is to say, their written word.”†

“ When Peter confessed that Jesus was the son of the living God, the Lord said to him : Upon this rock &c. ; that is to say, he will build His Church, not *upon Peter*, but upon the faith that Peter had in the Rock and Corner-stone of the church, and this Rock was Christ Himself.”‡

* Epist. ad Evang. 146.

† De Unitate Ecclesiæ, 5.

‡ Serm. 270, Pent. Retract, l. 1, cap. 21.

I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with Theodoret, bishop of Cyricus, A.D. 460 :

“ A blind faith is, on the contrary, the source of all the errors and all the evils of the church. Of all heresies, the worst and most dangerous is that, which is raising its head so high and so mighty in our days ; that, viz., which requires of man, with equal absurdity and injustice, to renounce his understanding, and not to examine his religion ; and thus prevents him from ever attaining a firm and living faith. Faith is called a blind assent to dogmas, that have no force and are based upon no proof.”*

I separate myself from the Pope, because I say with Gregory 1st, Bishop of Rome, A.D. 604 :

“ If a bishop is called by the name of universal bishop, then when this bishop falls, the whole church must fall with him. Away with such folly, such levity, such blasphemy, which deprives all other priests of the honour, that one in his folly arrogates to himself alone. To accept such a title is no less than to make shipwreck of the faith.”†

* Serm. 16.

† Epist. i. 7, 27, ad Athanas.

“The Bishop of Constantinople” (says the same writer) “has had the audacity to call himself Universal Pope, Catholic Father, Bishop of all the Bishops; but can this unexampled pride, this criminal ambition, be ought else than the fore-runner of Antichrist?” *

I separate myself from the Pope, because the Word of God says to me—“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe, and know the truth.” †

I separate myself from the Pope, because the Word of God says to me—“Come out of Babylon,” (the Church of Rome) “my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” ‡

* Epist. l. v. 19, ad Sabiniam.

† 1 Tim. iv. 1, 5.

‡ Rev. xviii. 4, 5.

But, in separating myself from the Pope, I
ATTACH MYSELF TO JESUS CHRIST.

I attach myself to Jesus Christ, because Simon Peter says, "I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." *

I attach myself to Jesus Christ, because St. Paul says, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I lay the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." †

I attach myself to Jesus Christ, because St. John says, "And now, little children, abide in Him," (in Jesus Christ,) "that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming." ‡

I attach myself to Jesus Christ, because He says Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." § "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." || "Come unto me," saith again this good Saviour, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." ¶

* 1 Peter ii. 6.

‡ 1 John ii. 28.

|| John iii. 36.

† 1 Cor. iii. 10, 12.

§ John xiv. 6.

¶ Matt. xi. 28.

Such is my declaration.

I will now attempt to show by what means I arrived at these convictions ; but first let me say that I am but a simple priest, who for twenty-one years have used no dialect, but that of the mountains of the ancient Comté de Foix (Ariège). I entreat you, therefore, benevolent reader, to excuse the simplicity of my language, and my faults of style.

II.

*Glory to God in the highest ; peace on earth, and
good-will towards men.*

TO THE INHABITANTS OF SERRES,

MY PARISHIONERS,

SALVATION AND BLESSING, THROUGH JESUS
CHRIST OUR LORD.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

If circumstances, as painful and delicate for you as for myself, had not detained me, I should have gone nearly two years since to refresh my heart and my faith in Jesus to a country, whose inhabitants, by the help of God, had the happiness

two hundred and seven years ago, of abolishing the Papacy, and of re-establishing the religion that Jesus Christ instituted, and the apostles taught, that is to say, freed from all the dogmas and superstitious practices with which popes and bishops have disfigured it, since about the year 700.

But as you yourselves were witnesses, two months and a half after I had given in my resignation of the office of priest, and member of the Church of Rome, certain priests took advantage of the weakness of a few poor women to get up a charivari. Amidst the insulting cries and noise that these persons raised amongst you, the cry of assassination and poison reached your ears—cries that recalled, but too forcibly, the ages of ignorance and barbarity that marked the reign of the Popes.

In the face of this unscriptural commotion, I felt myself obliged by duty, as well as by love for you, to defer my departure ; for I was willing to draw upon myself the fury of those spirits of darkness, and to seal with my blood those gospel truths, which it has been our happiness to know.

God willed in his eternal decrees, which I seek not to penetrate, that neither assassin nor

poisoner should be found amongst the worthy inhabitants of Serres. It will ever be to your honour and glory, that in spite of all the falsehoods of certain priests, you never for a single instant lost sight of that commandment, which says, "Thou shalt do no murder." (Exod. xx. 13).

Inhabitants of Serres! you have heard your church resound with the cry, "Destroy those people, (meaning the Protestants,) and your indignation was so roused, you were so scandalized by it, that many of you have never entered it since, while many others do it with regret, and only from deference to man, in the hope of better days. You felt that that voice was not the voice of a disciple of Him who has said, "Love one another; by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples."* You felt that that was not the doctrine of Him, who, through love to man, was born in a manger, and who, a short time before breathing his last sigh upon the cross, said to his dear disciple Peter, who had just struck one of the servants of the High Priest with a sword, "Put up thy sword into

* St. John xiii. 34, 5.

the sheath ;* for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." †

No, no, good friends, that voice which commanded you to destroy the Protestants, is not that of a minister of our good Saviour ; neither is it his doctrine, but the voice and the doctrine of a scion of that priesthood, which has for too many centuries bathed a great portion of our globe in blood. Let us hope, that by the grace of God, whatever may be the cruelty of these enemies of mankind, their sanguinary doctrine may no longer find an echo in our dear and beautiful country ; and that the voice of these priests will be for ever extinguished, as are the fires of their inquisition. You now know what you have to expect from them ; it is, therefore, impossible for them to delude you with their falsehoods. Whatever they may do, or whatever they may say, be not troubled ; the noblest vengeance that we can take, the only vengeance we are permitted, that which alone can disarm and subdue them, is from the bottom of our hearts to offer up that prayer, which our beloved Saviour, when expiring on the cross, addressed to God his Father for those who caused Him to

* John xviii. 11.

† Matt. xxvi. 52.

die in torments, such as make nature shudder, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."*

I, for my part, forgive with all my heart all the abuse, that the priests have poured forth against me, whether in public or in private.

You heard them likewise, inhabitants of Gan-nac, and you too were indignant. Since that time I have never ceased to ask myself, how these self-styled ministers of Jesus Christ could receive the communion of the Lord's Supper, whilst their hearts were swelling with anger, and their mouths filled with fury. The religion that came down from heaven, commands us to consider all men as brethren, and to love our most cruel enemies. But, alas! these priests teach the contrary; to hear them, one would think they sought to rekindle the fires of the Inquisition, which they themselves extinguished by the number of victims they cast in.

Dear inhabitants of Serres! was it thus that our divine Saviour acted? Oh no! for if ever the indignation of this God-man was roused, it was against those who had turned his house of prayer into a den of thieves;† against those

* Luke xxiii. 34.

† Matt. xxi.

hypocritical chief priests and Pharisees for their abuse of the law. *

Inhabitants of Serres ! I authorised the free circulation of the New Testament amongst you in a language that you understand—I have read and meditated upon some chapters of this holy book with you and your children, both in public and in private, and this they say is a grievous crime, for which I received the malediction of the episcopal court ; but tell me, I pray you, what harm there is in this ? If Esdras the priest rescued the old law from oblivion, and set it before the people,† what evil have I committed in also rescuing from oblivion, and setting before your eyes the book, which contains the law of grace, THE GOOD TIDINGS OF FREE SALVATION ;—that book, which even according to the confessions of some philosophers, is the only one which can make men honest.

If Moses was not wrong in abandoning the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, priest of Midian, to go and deliver the Israelites, his brethren, from the bondage to which the tyranny of Pharoah had reduced them,‡ what evil have I

* Matt. xxiii.

† Nehem. viii.

‡ Exodus iii.

committed in abandoning the flock of the Pope to deliver you, and bring you out of the slavery to which this impostor has devoutly handed us over ?

If Zerubbabel was not wrong in contributing to the re-establishment of the city of Jerusalem,* what evil can I have done in contributing, as much as in me lies, to the re-establishment of that religion, which Jesus Christ gave to our fathers ?

If the Daniels, the Amos's, the Samuels, and so many other courageous spirits, were not wrong in giving up all for the honour of religion, what evil do we do in sacrificing all for the restoration of that religion, which Jesus Christ gave to our fathers, and which the Bishop of Rome has by little and little taken from us, by adding doctrines and ceremonials of his own invention to it ?

Scarcely, however, was my resignation of the office of Romish priest made known, than some of them immediately reported that I had only quitted their banners, that I might have it in my power to give freer scope to my unruly passions, or from motives of interest at the best.

* Esdras iii.

But tell me, inhabitants of the towns of Ax, of Masset, and of Serres, did I ever scandalize you by irregular conduct? And you, priests, tell me,—when defending your gods and your chimerical ceremonies, are you exempt from passions? Are not these passions perhaps the very cause, which render you vile and odious in the eyes of the people? You have accused me of having from motives of interest deserted the banners of *his holiness* the king of Rome. But, inhabitants of Ax, Masset, and Serres, tell me, I pray you, have you ever heard the sound of my voice in your chambers, asking anything of you? Have I ever imposed the infamous “Casuel” * upon you? And ye priests who accuse me, tell me, I pray you, are you clear from all interested motives? I think not; for ordinarily it is your refusals to inter, to give the blessing at marriages, to say masses for the dead, which make the people cry out against your avarice. Ay, much more, you push your cupidity so far, as to deprive your parishioners of the Sunday mass, if

* So called to distinguish it from the fixed and regular stipend of the priests. Part of it arises from private masses for souls in purgatory, permission to eat meat on Fridays and Saturdays during Lent, &c. &c.

money is not forthcoming.* Nevertheless, (in my opinion at least,) you do well to act thus, for you prove by this single fact that you consider your ministry as a mere trade, and your masses simply as merchandise: "no money, no mass," that is your motto. The Romish church, gentlemen, opened her treasures and her riches to me as well as to you; but I preferred the truths of the gospel to all her treasures and all her riches,—although those truths only bring me persecution and suffering. But it cannot be otherwise. Did not our blessed Saviour forewarn us of this? Did not he say, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute

* The municipal council of the city of Masset (Ariege) not thinking it proper, in the year 1821, to vote the sum of one hundred francs in favour of the officiating priests of the parishes of Biert and du Port, these priests complained to their bishop, who gave them authority to suppress the morning mass on the Sunday; and this decree of the prelate was put into execution. From thence I premise one of two things—either the Bishop of Pamiers considered that the mass *is* necessary to salvation, or not; if the former, the bishop should have commanded the officiating priests to perform the mass, instead of allowing them to suppress it. By this act of diocesan authority, it is plain that he does *not* believe in the efficacy of the mass, and that he regards it as useless,—for it is not to be presumed that the bishop desired, that souls should be damned.

you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." *

Inhabitants of Serres and Gannac! who was it, I ask you, that got up a charivari against us? The priests—who wanted women and children to insult, abuse, and cast stones at us? The priests—who urged the mayor to exert his authority to prevent our religious meetings? The priests—who called in the aid of the gendarmes! The priests—these are the men, who for the defence of their arguments, and the protection of their religion and their God, require the assistance of the sword!!! Did not Mahomet use the same means?

Cursed!—ay, thrice cursed be the religion of the sword! Does not this levy of shields betray, but too plainly, the weakness of the cause they defend?

“To cry for help betrays a failing cause.”

Inhabitants of Serres and Gannac, and you too, dear reader, what is it that we ought to wish for, to ask for, and to obtain? The religion which Jesus Christ instituted,—that is to say, religion disencumbered of all the doctrines,

* Matt. v. 11, 12.

and all the mummeries with which the monks have soiled it in the sink of their convents. If religion were thus re-established, it would suit the wants of all, except those who make a trade of it. Then we should have the delight of seeing our churches, deserts as they now are, filled with the faithful servants of God,—the rich seated by the side of the poor,—the learned by the unlearned,—the old man by the young child,—all listening attentively to the Word of God, addressing to Heaven the same prayers and the same vows, and forming one heart and one soul.

I know well, my friends, that in re-establishing the religion that Jesus Christ gave to our fathers, we should ruin the pretty little revenues of the priests. This is what grieves them, and makes them cry out incessantly in their despair, “ You are lost ! you are lost ! ”

But let not this alarm you, dear inhabitants of Serres ; hear what Jesus Christ said to those who held similar language, “ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged ; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned ;* and elsewhere, “ Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye

* Luke vi. 37.

shut up the kingdom of heaven against men ; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*

Let the priests cry as much as they will, " You are lost ! you are lost !" be not alarmed. Seek Him who is " the resurrection and the life ;" " He that believeth in me," says Jesus Christ, " though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." † Let us then trust in thee, divine Saviour, let us be always ready to say with the same firm assurance as Martha, " Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God," ‡ and the sentence of condemnation, which the priests are in the habit of pronouncing against all who do not submit to their will, shall vanish into air.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, to guide and guard you ! Pray for me !

MAURETTE.

Serres, July 15, 1843.

* Matt. xxiii. 13.

† John xi. 25, 26.

‡ John xi. 27.

III.

Brought up from my earliest infancy in the principles of the Romish church, I followed its worship, and its ceremonies, throughout my youth with the utmost exactness. I will even say that I found pleasure and satisfaction in them; it was pain to me not to be occupied in them.

Filled with veneration for the office of a priest, I thought I saw in him, if not God himself, at least God's chosen one, the depository of the decrees of Heaven; one who trod luxury, self-indulgence, and every earthly pleasure under foot,—who poured all that he could spare into the bosoms of the afflicted, soothing their miseries, wiping away their tears, and carrying peace and concord into every family. Such, dear reader, was my idea of a priest; and this idea made me envy his situation and position. Arrived at the age of twenty, it led me to pursue my studies in theology at the great seminary at Toulouse.*

* In these seminaries, a chosen number of youths receive an imperfect education, from young persons who are only half instructed in the sciences themselves. The professorship is either entrusted to a young man without experience, who has

In consequence of the establishment of the bishoprick of Pamiers, I and my fellow-students of Ariège were obliged to quit this retreat, for the seminary in our new diocese ; which we entered the 6th of November, and where in the Christmas of the same year I was ordained priest. Since that time I have constantly per-just finished the course of his hasty studies, or some poor curé is made professor of doctrine and morality, who after having studied three years, and lived as many more amongst the mountains, is enchanted to accept this brilliant employment, and to teach others that which he knows little of himself ; consequently when a decision is required of any importance, he dares not give it. Thus it is impossible for a young man in these colleges to become a profound scholar. Having only a confused idea of things, he forms a false judgment, unless nature has given him a very clear and excellent understanding. Theology, as it is taught in the present day, is nothing but a miserable and degenerate school divinity, which disgusts the pupils by its dryness. The study of the Holy Scriptures is banished from the schools : the priest is, therefore, either condemned to silence, or to fly from the meanest peasant who cites any passage from them ; or if he does answer, it is only by crying out, " You are lost ! " What a pity that this interesting portion of the French youth should thus lose the taste, as well as the talent for study, in these dark retreats. But, however, *vae vobis, duces cæci !* (Matt. xxiii. 16). When these doctors develop any principles of doctrine, they take an indescribable pleasure in pouring forth atrocious abuse, either against philosophers, or against Protestants.

formed the duties of my parishes, without incurring the slightest displeasure from my superiors, while interdicts were issued against my brethren on all sides.*

Thus launched into the ministry, I was necessarily thrown into an intimate relation with the priests, and I took advantage of every leisure moment, to visit those in my own neighbourhood : but I soon learnt what a false idea I had entertained of a priest ; for instead of seeing in him a man of God, I found in general amongst this body, that I had thought so holy, none but men who were lovers of themselves, thinking only of their temporal interests ; most of them neglecting the fasts of the church, making themselves merry after a good dinner, and singing songs against the Pope and against purgatory ; maintaining superstitious doctrines before the people, and laughing at them in private ;† negligently

* Before giving in my resignation, interdicts and changes amongst the priests were the order of the day ; whoever preferred a complaint against his curé was received with eagerness and favour ; they say there is now a little more moderation, and that complaints are rejected.

† I wish, dear reader, that I could now relate to you some of those superstitious doctrines, which the priests have invented to snatch from the mouths of the poor, the last morsel of bread

fulfilling the functions of their ministry ; believing neither in the doctrine of real presence, nor in indulgences ; turning the poor and ignorant, who go to make a confession of their failings to them, into ridicule ; and mutually denouncing and traducing one another.

After an intercourse with them of many years, and seeing how little conformable their conduct was to the gospel, I could not but acknowledge, that the brilliant stones of the sanctuary were dimmed, that the salt of the earth had lost its savour, and that the lamps of Israel were extinguished. Seeing then what little faith and charity reigned in the hearts of the priests, I asked myself, and I asked both them, and the laity who partook of my astonishment, " Is religion then only for the poor ? "

But doubts soon took possession of my mind, and for my own internal tranquillity, I resolved to leave my parish as little as possible. The priests moreover accused me of singularity, and of parsimony, because I would not join in their revels.

that remains to them ; but I cannot resist the urgent entreaties of two of my christian friends, and I therefore defer to a future opportunity, the account I intended to have given you on the subject of sorceries and apparitions.

My doubts, however, increased ; I even felt that I was sinking into complete indifference.

During an ecclesiastical retreat, I made the state of my mind known to a vicar-general, and afterwards to an old and well-informed priest ; the first paid scarcely any attention to what I said, and by the weakness of his arguments, appeared to me to partake of my doubts ; the second was perfectly sincere, for he confessed frankly, that he had never believed in the real presence himself, nor in the existence of purgatory ; but the church having established these doctrines, it was necessary to maintain them amongst the people. This declaration on the part of the old priest pierced my soul, and occasioned me to make serious reflections on the unworthy part, that we, as priests, had to play here below before God and before intelligent men. In the mean time, I learnt that the archbishop of Toulouse had attacked the reformed Christians, and that they had replied to the attack. In conjunction with two of my brethren, I procured the two answers that the reformed Christians had sent to the prelate, as well as the anonymous reply that was sent to them. This controversy brought us acquainted with other works, which convinced

us, that the Romish religion, as it exists at this day, is nothing more than pure formalism, and that the reformed Christians are walking in the light of the Gospel : these blessed works showed us, that, in our schools of theology, we had only been fed with trifles, falsehoods, and superstitions ; that it was on false grounds that we were called priests, since THAT OFFICE HAD CEASED TO EXIST for more than 1800 years ; for there is no one part of the gospel in which Jesus Christ has ordained or instituted any expiatory sacrifice. *Jesus Christ alone is Priest or Sacrificer.* In dying upon the cross, this divine Saviour abolished every kind of sacrifice ; it is He who has “*finished*” all, as He himself says in St. John’s Gospel, (xix. 30.) The perusal of these works taught us that the unbloody sacrifice of the mass, was useless and delusive ; as St. Paul says to the Hebrews, (ix. 22,) “without shedding of blood is no remission” of sins ; besides which, man can neither merit, nor earn, nor buy heaven ; for St. Paul tells us, in the epistle to the Ephesians, (ii. 8, 9,) “by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not of works lest any man should boast.” Thus instructed in the true christian faith, I believed

myself conscientiously obliged to preach it in public and in private : my parishioners were so satisfied with it, that they could not help testifying their approbation to the inhabitants of the neighbouring parishes, and these people made such reports of it, that their priests were in consternation about it. They laid complaints against me, in consequence of which the bishop called upon me to appear before him in council, where I had to answer to each of the accusations brought against me. The council fancied it saw in my conduct, a system of opposition : to find out whether it was so, they first employed mildness, then intimidation. When the sitting was over, his highness offered me his hand, but I felt little confidence in this mark of friendship, and foresaw that I should soon fall a sacrifice.

Convinced, that I had hitherto been bred up in error, and not having the power of teaching the people, I determined to give up my office of priest, and to strip myself for ever of those ornaments, that the sacerdotal caste has borrowed from pagans and idolaters. I requested to be received into the reformed Church, the only one which professes a religion such as Christ taught. About two months afterwards, I had a visit from

a minister of the Holy Gospel, and twenty-one of my parishioners presented themselves at the presbytery, the evening of his arrival; and the venerable minister Charlier, after conversing with us a few minutes, edified us by the prayer that he addressed to God. The purpose of this meeting came to the ears of some curé; the whole priesthood was in commotion; the episcopal court itself was in agitation. Orders were given to the curé of the district, to repair to the place, and to institute an inquiry. The Curé of Foix, found this mission both painful and dangerous; for it is not every curé that is able to catechise protestants. The order was however given, and must therefore be executed. The delegate set out, but as he advanced, his courage failed him:—sad and disconcerted, he alighted at the house of the officiating priest of the parish of St. Peter, ex-professor of philosophy and theology; and entreated him to undertake the terrible mission, with which to his great annoyance he was charged.

The Abbé Pujol, who had long been my friend, complied with the wishes of the curé; he set off to my house, and accosted me with the smile which is so natural to him; he acquainted me

with the object of his visit, and the consternation into which I had thrown the higher classes of the clergy of Ariège, by receiving at my house a protestant minister, and praying with him and my parishioners. After a friendly though serious conversation, the Abbé Pujol told me that he could not avoid making his report, which I gave him full liberty to do; and on my own part, to secure myself from the interdict that the bishop was about to issue against me, I prepared my resignation of the office of priest and member of the Romish Church,* of which the following is a literal copy,

* In the position, in which I then found myself, I felt that I should be infallibly interdicted: I therefore determined upon tendering my resignation to shield myself from the false and odious reports, that would not fail to be spread abroad concerning me. No priest is permitted to defend himself against those who secretly accuse him of any pretended misconduct; especially if his accusers are themselves priests. This is precisely the inquisition. It is evidently contrary to the law which our good Saviour has Himself given us." If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." (Matt. xviii. 15.) If the accused priest open his mouth to defend himself, the secretary general says to him in an arrogant tone, "silence!" If the ecclesiastic tries to pass Mr. Sentinel "silence," forth flies from the mouths of the vicars general a "chut," so prolonged, that one seems to

MY LORD,

I have the honour to inform you, that the eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, having for some time past, by a pure act of His grace, inclined me to consider my soul's eternal interests, I have been led, by reading and meditating on the Holy Word of God, to perceive that the Roman Catholic religion does not direct our souls in the way, that that Holy Word ordains as being the only one which leads to salvation. I beg you therefore to accept my resignation of the office of priest of the Romish church, which I can no longer acknowledge as an apostolic church of Jesus Christ. Permit me, my Lord, briefly to state to you my reasons for this step, and to give any other explanations that may be desired, as well as to render a reason for my faith, according to the command given us by St. Peter (1 Epist. iii. 15), " Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an

be all at once surrounded by those birds of night, called " Cheriette. (A kind of owl.) If the interdict be launched, without the accused having been called to appear before the episcopal bar, and he afterwards presents himself to inquire the reason of it ; the bishop replies, that he is responsible to no one for his conduct but God.

answer to every man, that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." It is in this spirit, with all humility, that I have the honour to apprise you, 1st, that I can no longer conscientiously fulfil the functions of a priest, because I can find no part of the word of God, that has established an order of priesthood, or a sacerdotal or sacrificial character attributed to the ministry, for this plain reason, that as it has neither instituted, nor ordained any expiatory sacrifices, so it has no need of men, whose office it shall be to sacrifice. Jesus Christ is the only sacrificing priest. He has accomplished all, as He Himself says in the Gospel according to St. John (xix. 30)—"It is finished; and he bowed His head, and gave up the Ghost." Again, St Paul teaches us, in the 9th ch. 28th ver. of the Epist. to the Heb. that the sacrifice of Christ was offered *once* only, in these words, "So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." And in the 10th chap. 12th ver. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."

It evidently follows from these three passages, in which it is said :

1st, That Christ was offered *once* to take away sins ;

2ndly, That he offered **ONE ONLY** sacrifice ;

3rdly, That He said *all was* " **FINISHED** " :—

It evidently follows, I say, that there remains no more sacrifice to be made ; for in truth, Christ has finished all.

Again, the Holy Word of God teaches us that the sacrifice of the mass is useless and absurd, as St. Paul says to the Hebrews, (ix. 22,) " Without shedding of blood, is no remission" i. e. of sins.

2ndly, I have learnt that salvation is entirely gratuitous : consequently we can neither buy, earn, nor merit it ; for St. Paul says to Titus, " Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (iii. 5.)

The same apostle teaches us again (Ephes. ii. 8, 9), that we are saved by grace, to the exclusion of works, in these words,—“ For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast.”

The evident result of these three passages is, that as works are of no effect unto salvation, it is

not necessary to have priests to judge whether our works are good or bad, sufficient or insufficient. This is a matter with which they have nothing to do. One thing only is necessary, viz. faith, which being the gift of God, and not of man, cannot be dispensed by men. No order of priests can give absolution ; it is a matter of faith between the believer and his God.

Nevertheless, my Lord, and to avoid all misconception, I hasten to add, that though works are useless as respects our salvation, they are not so as regards christian practice ; seeing that they are not the *cause*, but the *consequence* of salvation. Faith without works is dead, says St. James (ii. 17, 26.)

3rdly, I have learnt that every believer is competent to search the scriptures, and to know the way they point out. Indeed the Lord tells us in St. Luke, (xi. 13,) “ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” The apostle James tells us also, (i. 5,) “ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him.”

It follows from these passages, on the clearest evidence, that the believer receives from God, on his asking for it in prayer, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and wisdom, to discern the truths by which he is guided in the way of salvation. The believer has nothing more to desire, nor to hope for ; he receives from his God, and from his God alone, the fulness of the knowledge of the things that concern his eternal peace.

To sum up the whole, there results from these three propositions :—

1st. That the whole fabric of the Roman priesthood is not of divine institution, and that it is useless, since the Word of God makes no mention of it, and gives it nothing to do.

2nd. That whereas salvation is gratuitous, and not of works, all that the Romish church teaches, under the name of indulgences, penances, and meritorious works, are the commandments of men, and not only useless, but injurious to salvation ; inasmuch as they attribute to man what is solely derived from the grace of God.

3rd. In short, the Word of God institutes no infallible body in matters of faith ; but it gives to every believer sufficient wisdom to direct him in the way of salvation.

These three points established, there is left for Rome neither priest, nor administration of salvation, nor infallibility, that is to say, there is *nothing* left her.

I beg you to be assured, my lord, that these are the views which make me quit your church. It is a painful step to me, and one that makes my heart bleed; for my connexion with you, my lord, has been one of great happiness to me, nor has your authority been a burden to me; and I have appreciated your kindness. I hope that on your part you will acknowledge, that wherever I have been employed, my conduct has been disinterested, and free from reproach.

I ought also to say, my lord, that although resigning my office of priest of the Romish church, I still consider myself the minister of Jesus Christ—not to be lord over God's heritage, but to assist and encourage them, by the preaching of the word, according to the command of St. Peter (ii. 1, 3).

I entreat you, my lord, to accept my sincere good wishes and profound respect

MAURETTE.

Having prepared the notice of my resignation,

I thought it right to keep it, till the moment when I should be attacked by my superiors. For this attack I had not long to wait. On the 10th of March I received a letter from a priest, whom I shall not name, to warn me that the *bishop* had arrived at Foix the evening before, and that he had had on that day a long conversation with the prefect; that on the day following he was to issue an interdict against me, in the presence of a dozen priests, who were already invited; that I myself should receive a letter of invitation, if I had not received it already, and in case of my refusal to come, or of any subsequent resistance on my part, the gendarmes were placed at the disposal of his lordship. My friend ended his letter by entreating me to be submissive and obedient.

I bless God, dear reader, for having inspired this priest with the desire to render me so signal a service, as that of acquainting me with all the steps the bishop had taken: I saw immediately that the moment for giving in my resignation had arrived: the bishop was at Foix, and considering all the precautions that he had taken, I deemed it best to address my resignation to him at Pamiers, being persuaded that in thus acting

I should make his proceedings and preparations against me absurd.

IV.

As the abbé had foretold, about eight in the morning of the 11th of March, I received the bishop's letter, couched in these terms.

SIR,

There are reports in circulation in these parts, which deeply afflict me; no one is better qualified than yourself to give me the information that I require. I arrived at Foix last night, and shall remain here till I can receive from you in person the necessary explanations. I beg you to set off on the receipt of this letter; the person who delivers it has orders to wait for you. Do not delay, for I must return to Pamiers as soon as possible.

Accept sir, my humble salutations,

(Here follows the signature)

† G. L., BISHOP OF PAMIERS.

Foix, March 10, 1841.

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MY ANSWER TO THE BISHOP.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to inform you, that I transmitted by post last night a letter, containing the explanation which your lordship requires. The packet is doubtless by this time arrived at its destination, where your lordship will find it on your return to your palace.

I am, &c. &c

MAURETTE.

LETTER FROM THE BISHOP.

Pamiers, March 27, 1841,

I have received, sir, your overwhelming letter of the 8th of this month, and I know not what interpretation you will have put upon my silence. As soon as your designs were known to me, I hastened to obtain an interview with you. In spite of my infirmities I set off to Foix, where I invited you to join me ; but you would not see me, you fled my presence. Ah ! no doubt you feared me, and you had reason to do so ; you feared that I should appeal to your heart* to

* When we address ourselves to the *heart* of any man, we

prevent your being lost. In your blindness, and under some strange infatuation, you chose rather to draw up, or subscribe a resolution, the most extraordinary, the most contrary not only to the principles of the faith, but of plain common sense; the most dishonourable to your own reputation, and the most scandalous to the church and to society. You have dared to tell me that from motives, of which you pretend not to see the futility, and which are, you well know, nothing but objections that have been a thousand times refuted, you abandon your functions of a priest of the Romish church, to be what you call a minister of the Gospel, and give up the direction of the parish of Serres, which was entrusted to you. Take care, sir, how you confirm the sinister presentiments that were entertained respecting you, how you justify the censures that I was lately called upon to make on your conduct before my council, when your only defence was a denial of the charges brought against you, as false as the protestations by which I was deceived.

I wished to leave you some time for reflection.

do not cry out loudly for the aid of the sword; without *this addition* I should not have been afraid of the bishop.

You might have profited by good advice, even in the false position in which you had placed yourself. I reckoned much on the touching exhortations, which would not fail to be made to you. No man is ignorant of the efforts that the zeal and love of the curés of St. Vallery, of St. Girons, St. Lizier, and others, have made to bring you back to the right path. What has become of the promises you made to them? Ah! there is yet time; return, my dear sir, the heart of your bishop is still open to you; come and console him by your repentance, and the assurance of your sincere conversion. Ah! if you knew what bitter grief your errors have caused me, you would not let any further obstinacy oblige me to take the final step, and to pronounce the penalty of the law against you; for I warn you, sir, and it is for the last time, that your answer to this letter, or your conduct, if you do not reply to it, will regulate mine towards you.

I pray that God may enlighten and touch your heart by his powerful grace, and rely upon it, sir, that my most anxious desire is to receive you to my arms.

(Here follows the signature)

† G. I., BISHOP OF PAMIEERS.

ANSWER.

Serres, April 3, 1841.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the letter you wrote me, in answer to the one I addressed to you on the 8th of March. I am truly sensible, my lord, of the interest you are good enough to take in my reputation. I thank you especially for the prayer you offer for me at the end of your letter, in asking of God that his powerful grace may enlighten and touch my heart. It is, in fact, this powerful and free grace of God, which sought me out in the thick darkness in which I have so long lived, to bring me into the pure light of the truth, as it is found in the holy Gospel; and I now desire to live and die according to the rule which He has given us in His word. I can scarcely believe that this is what you call an "extraordinary resolution, contrary to the principles not only of faith, but even of common sense; the most dishonourable to my reputation, and scandalous to the church and to society!!" Ah; my lord, observe, I beseech you, that it is a resolution based upon

the *Word of God*, to which you give this character. You also speak of the motives which I gave for my conduct in my letter of the 8th of March, as "futile and often refuted." Permit me, my lord, to say, that it would be more to the honour of the Romish church to answer them clearly and triumphantly, than to employ epithets which convince no one. Remember, my lord, that it is the Church of Rome, and not the Church of Christ, from which I detach myself, to turn to the law and the testimony of God. I had hoped, that the fidelity and sincerity of my conduct towards you, and your council would have shielded me from the charge of falsehood, of which you have accused me, and by which you oblige me to recall facts, which in christian charity I would willingly have left in oblivion. Since, then, it must be so, I will take the assertions contained in your letter, and reply to them one by one.

"Take care," you say, "how you justify the presentiments that were entertained against you." I should be glad to know, my lord, *who* are the persons who felt these presentiments against me. It is, however, of little importance, as I am persuaded, that instead of weeping at what you

term *my blindness*, these men have so little sincerity, that they are internally rejoiced at it, thinking that my conversion to the pure faith of the Gospel will afford them, not a field for christian liberty, but a favourable opportunity for the unrestrained indulgence of their passions, in consequence of your laxity of discipline. If any one of them had a presentiment of what has happened, why did he not extend a hand to save me from falling? How was the charity of the Samaritan in him? Ah! my lord, I hear you whisper in my ear, "My child, it was a *priest*." I believe it, my lord!

Again you say, "Clear yourself from the charges I had occasion to make against you before my council, where your only defence was a denial of them."

Pardon me, my lord, pardon me, and permit me to recal to memory the heinous offences of which I was accused, on the 12th of January last. We shall presently see, whether my only defence consisted of denials.

1st. I was accused of having criticised documents that emanated from diocesan authority. To this accusation I replied, "It is possible;" and I asked what those documents were? The

Abbé Doubant said, "They are not mentioned." No one pursued the subject, and I was therefore silent myself. Where, I ask, is my denial here?

2ndly. I was accused of having said, I was ashamed of being a priest, and it gave me pleasure to reply, "It is true." Where then is my denial? Let me say, by the way, who would not be ashamed of being a priest in these days, when the avarice and misconduct of so many of them, have extinguished the faith of the people.

3rdly. I was accused of having held immoral conversations. I replied, "It is possible, but I do not recollect it." The Abbé Doubant made very just observations on this subject, supposing me guilty, and I answered, St. James in his epistle tells us that, "if a man offend not with his tongue, the same is a *perfect* man," and that I considered myself very far from perfection; the Abbé Doubant said no more. Where is my denial here, my lord? especially as after this strict examination, I wrote to the Abbé Faur, the vicar general, to confess to him that I really had been guilty of this offence, for being in company one day, when a priest amused himself by singing a verse of a song against purgatory, I could not help saying that, "the priests who

think most of purgatory, are those who have wives to maintain." This remark was certainly immoral, I confess, my lord ; but again, where is my denial ?

4thly. I was accused of associating with no priests, but those of bad character. I immediately named those, whom I visited and who visited me ; and, I asked which of them were men of bad character ? Your venerable council was silent, and passed on to the next charge. Tell me, I entreat you, where is my denial ?

5thly. I was accused of not reciting my breviary. To this accusation, I neither answered yes, nor no. The yes would have savoured of hypocrisy, and the no would have been a direct falsehood ; for I only laid aside my breviary on the 8th of March, that is to say, after I had seen your cruel attack upon me. Let me, however, do justice to my accusers ; for they might imagine, and consequently say without meaning any falsehood, that I did not recite my breviary, since I always chose either the sacristy, or my own chamber, to say my prayers in ; having never been able to bring myself to use a public thoroughfare or highway, nor even the garden or park of M. and Mad. de ——— for this purpose ;

and that because I had read in the Gospel of St. Matthew, vi. 5, 6 : And thou “ when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father.”

Here again, where is my denial ?

6thly. I was accused of associating with none but irreligious persons.

I instantly named the families that I occasionally visited, viz. : the Comminges, the Peybernés, the Paulys, the Bonnefontes, the Cassé Pourroufats, the Piquemals, the Bergäis, the Laurens, &c., &c. It is impossible, my lord, to consider these families as irreligious ; for my own part, I regard them as good Christians, although indeed, when at church, they are tired of seeing a man at the altar, turning and twisting to the right and left, without being able to comprehend, either what he says, or what he does, any more than the priests themselves, who frequently understand as little what they are doing, as the people do.

These families are not irreligious, my lord, for

they have no other desire than to practise the religion that Jesus Christ instituted. These families are not irreligious, for their hearts burn with the sacred fire of charity. I appeal to the irrefragable testimony of our indigent brethren, who never knock at their doors in vain; and you know, my lord, that charity is the fruit of faith.

Again, my lord, I ask you, where is my denial?

7thly. I was accused of demanding no fees for masses, funerals, marriages, &c., &c.

I could not possibly have denied this offence; for you know, I never had the heart to say to any one, be he who he might, "Pay me, for unless thou dost, I will not perform the rites of sepulture, to thy relation, or thy friend, &c. Pay me, if not, I will not pray to God for thee, nor for thy father, nor thy mother, &c., &c.; bring me money, or there is no heaven for thee." No, no, I never had the heart to do this.

Here my lord, is enough to prove that I did not defend myself by *denials*.

With regard to the endeavours, that were made by the officiating Abbé of the Church of St. Vallier, to induce me to retract what I wrote to you on the 8th of March, I assure you they

were as urgent, as I was firm. I am truly sorry that I could not yield my convictions to the wishes of my friend ; but it was impossible.

With respect to the position in which I am placed, and which your lordship thinks a false one, make yourself easy, my lord ; *I* think it a most happy one, and that is sufficient : above all, when I consider that finding the riches of this world could never satisfy my soul, I never attached myself to them. The grace of God and the favour of God, is the only treasure of which I am ambitious ; one far more precious to me, than life and all its enjoyments.

After your lordship has well considered my letter of the 8th of March, you are at liberty to employ the penalties which you threaten me with. Strike, my lord, if such is your pleasure ; I shall seek no other consolation than the word of God, which I shall never cease to meditate upon, for in it I find strength, and peace, and courage : it is there, my lord, that I learn to render good for evil, love for hatred, benefits for insults.

A few words more, my lord. Since you are still willing to open your arms to me, and take an interest in my soul, permit me to offer up my prayers for your's. You pray to God that his

grace may enlighten me ; believe me, that I also offer up my most ardent prayers, that you yourself may be enlightened on the subject of your eternal interests ; for what will become of your soul, if you follow not the only “ *way, and the truth, and the life ;*” if, placing your confidence in a church which can do nothing for you, you do not call upon the *only name by which we can be saved.*

Open your heart then to the gospel of grace, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding will rest upon you. May the Lord in his mercy pour this sweet consolation into your heart.

Deign, my lord, to accept, with my sincerest prayers, my most profound respect.

MAURETTE.

V.

To this letter, the bishop in his perplexity attempted seventeen days after, to oppose an order of excommunication,* as if this prelate was

* The French bishops are very fond of punishing their priests, and it is truly astonishing, that in the age in which we now live, we never see any prelate manifestly chastised,

ignorant that I had excommunicated myself by my letter of the 8th of March. But, since it is so, I will say, Farewell! then, again, to thee, Church of Rome. *Farewell!!* More than three

though there are many amongst them that deserve severe condemnation and correction, for their scandalous and unjust conduct. These are things which are passing before the eyes of the people, in spite of all laws human and divine. These gentlemen, the French bishops, convinced that their power is not to be shaken, reign like perfect despots over their priests; and this is not surprising, since, forgetting the rock whence they are hewn, they condemn by their actions, and sometimes by the most injurious language, the power of their temporal and spiritual Sovereign; publicly teaching that the Pope can be deposed by a Council, if he sin against any one of his brethren: but these pontiffs are careful not to say that they can be deposed themselves, if they sin against any of their subjects. On the contrary, they assert, that neither the spiritual head, nor the head of the State, have any power over them. The single fact, of their manifest rebellion against the royal decree of June 1828, with regard to the little seminaries, proves it in the most unequivocal manner. They all, with the exception of six or seven, publicly declared in a memorial, their determined rejection of it. Covered with shame and confusion, because the sovereign authority, manifested the same determined resolution to carry the decree into effect; [these royal decrees, regarded only the temporalities of the seminaries, and not the doctrine taught there;] they had recourse to the Pope; but not out of respect to his authority I think, since when the head of the church replied that the

centuries ago, a bright ray of the Sun of righteousness darted in your face, and stripped it of its mask. It is in vain now that you fly from the light, your wrinkles appear, your defects are seen, and your ignorance is increasing every day. Kings and people have discovered your deformity, and are recovering from their blindness; they are insensible to your caresses, they despise your menaces, and your thunders no longer terrify. You are old and wrinkled! there

affair must be left to the piety of the king, they were indignant at this answer, and would not abide by it, but followed their own inclinations. This single fact proves, that they defy all power, whether spiritual or temporal, and that they desire to govern all men.

Prelates! tell me, I pray you, whether your conduct is conformable to the doctrine of St. Paul? I think not; for in the Epistle to the Romans, (xiii. 1, 2, 3,) that great Apostle commands "every soul to be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God."... "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

Our divine Lawgiver, when speaking of a Pagan Emperor, said, Render unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are Gods.' If this powerful example does not affect you, look at the chastisements, with which the penal code threatens you.

And you kings and princes, hear what Ovid prescribes to you: check the progress of evil in the bud; a tardy remedy is often unsuccessful. De. remed. v. 91.

is nothing in you to gratify or rejoice the heart.
Farewell ! Farewell !!

The bishop has then excommunicated me, dear reader. History has preserved some precious remembrances, of the good use the popes and bishops made of this weapon, which was so much dreaded in the days of ignorance and barbarism. They then abused it to such an extent, that the pontiff, who in the present day, dares make use of it, only exposes himself to contempt.

The bishop has excommunicated me, because I have embraced the faith as it is in Jesus Christ. My only consolation is, that the high priests and chiefs of the synagogue, also called down imprecations on those Israelites who embraced the same faith, and devoted them to the furies of Hell. "Jerusalem," says Berruyer,* "would have become wholly christianized on the first preaching of the Apostles, if those whose duty it was to instruct the people, had not for the most part been impious and irreligious men."

The bishop has excommunicated me, because I have said and preached that the Romish religion, such as it is now, is a mere formalism and a

* History of the people of God, by Berruyer, vol. 6, p. 160.

trade ; that money is the only end which most of the priests have in view ; it is the only God they worship.

The bishop has excommunicated me, dear reader, because I have said and preached, that the doctrine of purgatory was not introduced into the Romish Church till 1438, by the Council of Florence, and that the Council of Trent afterwards hastily confirmed it during its last session. That I may not be accused of having done so on light grounds, let us examine the question, and we shall see whether the bishop's ill-treatment of me is just or unjust. In the first place, let us interrogate the Holy Scriptures. St. Paul tells us,* that the Son of God, "when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

St. John says,† "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from *all* sin."

Jesus Christ says, in St. John's Gospel,‡ "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life."

Since then Jesus Christ has cleansed us from our sins, and that this divine Saviour Himself assures us that *he who believes in Him that sent*

* Epist. Heb. i. 3.

† 1 John i. 7.

‡ v. 24.

Him HAS ETERNAL LIFE, should then remain to be cleansed by purgatory? Is not the blood of the Son of His love sufficient? Is it possible to believe, with the theologians of the Pope, that God torments his redeemed people, his elect, in fire, not to correct them, but *to expiate the sins that He has pardoned?*

Let us never forget, dear reader, that the God of Christians is a God of love, not a chief of the Inquisition; and it is for having preached these truths to the poor, that the bishop has anathematized me.

But let us not blame him too severely yet; perhaps the fathers of the church countenance him in this doctrine.

1st. St. Cyril says, "I will not believe that the souls of the faithful go into a place of torment; for it is written, they are always with Jesus Christ." *

2nd. St. Chrysostom tells us, "When we leave this world, there will be no longer time either for repentance, or for the pardon of our sins." †

3rd. St. Bernard says, that "there are but three places, heaven, earth, and hell. Heaven

* In Evang. Job xxxvi.

† St. Chrysostom, Hom. ii., de Laz.

contains the good, the earth both good and bad, and hell only the wicked." *

From these three passages, it is quite evident that purgatory is an invention of the Pope and bishops, since the primitive church was ignorant of any such doctrine ; and because my conscience told me that I ought to preach the truth on this subject, the bishop has thought proper to close the door of heaven against me. O that our venerable prelate would reflect upon it ; that he could hear from the recesses of his palace the poor peasants continually repeating to all who will listen to them, " The priests are thieves ! Our religion is a religion of money ! "

Bishops, curates, and vicars ! is not a cry like this sufficient to rend your hearts, and produce some salutary effect upon you ?

Away, then, with this purgatory, this child of avarice. Let us put our trust in our Lord and Saviour, who so loved us, as to suffer death in our stead, that there might be no more condemnation for us. Let us raise ourselves upon the wings of faith towards that gracious Saviour, without whom no one can draw near to God. Let us seek no other righteousness than his

* Scharp's Course of Theology, p. 2005.

righteousness, no other mercy than his mercy ; no other purgatory than his precious blood which was shed for our sins. He alone is *the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish, that taketh away the sins of the world.*

The bishop has excommunicated me, dear reader, because I said that confession to a priest was a human ordinance. In fact, this confession was so little known for three or four centuries after the time of the apostles, that St. Chrysostom says expressly, " God commands us to confess our sins to Him alone, and let this be done without witnesses. Let no one but God only see your confession." * .

It is proved, by a council held at Chalons upon Saône, in the ninth century, that auricular confession was not then established ; and it was not till the thirteenth century, in 1215, that the fourth Council of Lateran commanded this practice, and rendered it obligatory.

Confession in the ear of a priest is not therefore of apostolic origin.

I know, dear reader, that they will not fail to reply, that when Jesus Christ breathed on the apostles, he said to them, " Whose soever sins

* Hom. xxviii.

ye remit, they are remitted ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."* And how can sins be remitted or retained, say the Romish doctors, if they are not confessed ?

Ye blind guides, I would say to them, are ye yet ignorant that the power to remit sins, which our Lord confided to His apostles, meant nothing more than the good tidings of pardon, obtained through Jesus Christ, which the apostles were sent to proclaim throughout all the world. "He that believeth shall be saved," say they, "but he that believeth not shall be damned."

If it were otherwise, dear reader, the apostles and their successors must have been ignorant for twelve centuries, that the Lord had established a tribunal of judges upon earth, to whom this power was transmitted, and who, in his name, had a right to pronounce or to refuse the sentence of divine absolution. Such ignorance is not to be imagined in the apostles, nor in the pastors of the primitive church.

I could add further authorities to the proofs already given, which militate against auricular confession, a worthy relic of the Inquisition, with which priestly barbarity so long afflicted the greatest part of Europe. But those already

* St. John xx. 23.

advanced are much more than sufficient to prove, that the confession of which we are speaking is purely of human invention.

The priesthood, looking with anxiety to the future, endeavoured to support themselves as long as possible, by taking advantage of the ages of ignorance to arrogate to themselves the right of knowing the thoughts, and words, and actions of men, and thus to dive into our hearts; a right which belongs to God alone. It was in the times immediately preceding the Reformation, that the bishops made the confession of which we are speaking obligatory upon the people; a most worthy expedient, to wrest from the wife an avowal of the words and actions of her husband; from the child, the revelation of all the most important secrets of the family; and a sure method to this day for disturbing the peace of families, and throwing not only parishes, but even empires into confusion.

We will, if you please, reader, terminate this question by the following reflections.

Who is it that confesses in these days? A few women and ignorant people. A few crafty sycophants, who to cover their thefts, their usuries, their rogueries, and their lies show

great eagerness to confess and communicate at Easter.

Do the priests confess? Generally speaking I know not; but this I know, that the priest seeks one whose character resembles his own. They soon agree to visit each other, to dine together; after which they make up their little parties, which are prolonged from two till eight the next morning. All that I know of their confession is, that there are few priests who receive the sacraments on their death-bed, and still fewer who express a wish to do so.

I know not, indeed, but may not the reason be, that in their last moments they cannot forget that they have always been in the habit of making a merchandise of them?

The bishop has excommunicated me, because I have said, both in public and in private, that we ought not to pray to the saints whom it has pleased the Pope to canonise. Let us examine the Word of God, and see if that authorises it.

We read in the Gospel of St. Luke,* that one day as Jesus "was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray." "After this

* xi. 1.

manner," said our Saviour, "pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name ; Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven ; Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors ; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." If we ought to address any of our prayers to the saints, surely our Saviour would have said something about it ; instead of which, you see that He makes no mention of it whatever. And more—in the Gospel according to St. John,† Jesus Christ says, " Whatsoever ye shall ask of my Father, IN MY NAME, that will I do." Jesus Christ does not say, " Whatever ye shall ask of my Father, in the name of such and such a saint, I will do it. "

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read " that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."‡ But it is nowhere said, whosoever shall call on the name of such or such a saint shall be saved.

To these testimonies from Scripture, I will also add that of St. Chrysostom, who says, that

* St. Matt. vi. 9. † xiv. 13. ‡ ii. 21.

we want no intermediary, nor officer, nor person, to present us to God ; as is done towards the great ones of the earth. God is always near, always in every place ; He hears us everywhere, He is always with us.

To be able to pray to the saints, they must be present everywhere, and hear our prayers. But, my lord, you well know that it is God alone who is everywhere present, who sees all, hears all, and knows all, even our most secret thoughts. You also know, my lord, that it is written, that when man passeth from this world, " his children come to honour, and he knoweth it not ; they are brought low, and he perceiveth it not."*

Teach them, therefore, my lord, to submit themselves to Jesus alone ; to believe in the fullness of his grace and his intercession ; to come out from the midst of the darkness of error and falsehood, and to preach to the people with St. Paul,† " That there is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Hear again the voice of the Lord himself. " I am," he said, " the way, and the truth, and

* Job. xiv. 21.

† 1 Tim. ii. 5.

the life ; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

The bishop has excommunicated me, because I have said, both in public and private, that we ought not to blame, much less condemn, Roman Catholics who attend neither mass nor vespers, because they are weary of not understanding what the priest says, nor what he does, nor what is chanted in church. Let us hear, whether St. Paul authorises him to treat me so severely for this. “If the trumpet,” says he, “give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak unto the air. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.”†

This is exactly what happens between the priest and the people, when mass and vespers are chanted. One is a barbarian to the other, because the one does not comprehend what the other says.

“I had rather,” says St. Paul again, “speak

* St. John xiv. 6.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 8, 9, 11.

five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."*

Let us interrogate some of the fathers of the church on this head also.

1st. St. Basil says, that "the unanimous custom of all the teachers is, that every man offer up his prayers in his own tongue."†

St. Ambrose says, "Do you gather the church together to edify it? If so, use words that your congregation can comprehend."‡

From the texts above cited, it is evident that St. Paul, St. Basil, and St. Ambrose, condemn the custom of prayers and chants being made in a tongue unknown to the people. Is it then surprising, that many Catholics either avoid attending mass and vespers, or else wait outside the church during these services? Why enter, when they do not understand Latin? and why, for my part, should I tremble under the bishop's malediction, when I have such authorities to rely on?

The bishop has excommunicated me, because I have authorised the free use of the New Tes-

* Ib. 19. † Bas. Epist. 63. ‡ St. Ambrose, 1 Cor. xiv.

tament in my parish, and have myself distributed eighty copies.

My consolation is that St. Chrysostom says, "I beseech you, who belong to the people, to procure the Holy Bible, which is the medicine of the soul, or to get the New Testament at least."*

St. Jerome tells us, that "the laity ought to abound in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures;"† and does not God himself pronounce a blessing upon the man, "whose delight is to meditate in the law of the Lord day and night?"‡

Was it not He himself who said to the people, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life."§ "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read," says the prophet Isaiah, speaking to all the nations of the earth.||

With these testimonies, can I possibly repent of having engaged my parishioners to read the Holy Scriptures, and of having rendered this book dear to them, by teaching them that the reading it is necessary to salvation? Let the priests gnash their teeth, let the bishop anathematize me for it; what matters it, when I know that the Lord blesses me for it? Better to die

* Hom. 9.

† Comm. on the Epistle to Colossians.

‡ Psalm i. 2.

§ St. John v.'39. || Isaiah xxxiv. 16.

a thousand deaths, than to renounce the book of God. Let us hold it fast; press it so closely to our hearts, that neither pope, nor bishop, nor rector, nor vicar, can *ever* take it from us; though all gathered together for the purpose, and accompanied by all the executioners in the world. For what would become of us, were we deprived of the Word of God? We should be buried in the darkness of an eternal night; and prostrate, not before the living God, but before images, the work of men's hands. Let us not deceive ourselves, dear reader, on this matter; for this impiety, this idolatry would infallibly lead us to destruction. The Holy Scriptures are the gift of God. They are the common property of all men; they belong to the whole world; to the unlearned, as well as to the learned; to the laity, as well as to the priest; to the man who dwells under his own fig-tree and his own vine, and to the savage who wanders from desert to desert. This is why the Bible now speaks all languages, and addresses itself to all men, "He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth, his word runneth very swiftly."*

* Psalm cxlvii. 15.

All men ought to know it, because all have need of the Saviour it announces.

The Word of God, and especially the Gospel, is the glad tidings of reconciliation, of peace, and grace, that the King of heaven and earth will have published through the whole extent of his revolted empire. This is why Jesus Christ, the great, the only object of these Scriptures, addresses to all men, by the means of his word, this blessed invitation, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."* Let then all eyes be turned towards this gracious Saviour; let every knee bend before Him: and that they may do so, let all men hasten to receive that word of salvation, which the same gracious Saviour addresses to them.

If the Bible is a present that God has made to the whole family of mankind; if it is a pledge of his mercy; if it is an earnest, which He has been pleased to give us of his love for those who attach themselves to his Son; in a word, if it is the sacred deposit of the truths of salvation; why interdict the reading of it? Why shut up from men the source of life, which the infinite love of God has opened? Do not those, who seek to

* Isaiah xlv. 22.

persuade you that there is danger in receiving the word of God, charge Him with imprudence or perfidy? Ought we to be distrustful of so gracious a Father? Ought we to fear the gift, which He tenders with his loving hand?

Know you what we ought to fear? We ought to fear whatever comes from the prejudices of those around us. Know you what we ought to fear? We ought to fear, lest we weary the patience of a Judge, who is slow to anger, and shut ourselves out from heaven, by neglecting the reading of his holy word. Love it then, Catholic, or Protestant, whoever, or whatever you are. Let it hereafter be the only rule of our faith; the compass to guide us to salvation. Remember that this is the purpose for which God has given it to us, and that we must one day render an account of the use we have made of it. "Blessed is the man, whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."*

* Psalm i 2, 3.

Deeply penetrated with these holy truths, I leave to my excommunicator, and his adherents full and entire liberty, to use the favourite arms of the Romish church against me, which are abuse, folly, falsehood, and calumny. Let them treat me as a fool, a monster, an apostate : I will rejoice in it ; for it was thus, that the impious members of the synagogue designated the apostles themselves, and those Israelites who turned from Judaism to embrace the Gospel.

VI.

Methinks, dear reader, that you will now put the same question, that the Jews did to St. Peter, after his first sermon, "What must we do to be saved?" Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."*

Beloved reader, you who desire to be saved, and who are enquiring for the way of salvation, ask St. Paul and he will teach you ; he will say,

* Acts ii. 38.

not as the priests do,—*Come, and I will confess you, I will give you absolution, fast, keep maigre days, tell your beads, give us the means of saying masses, go and pray at such an altar or in such a chapel, invoke such or such a saint, &c., &c.*, but he will say as he said to the jailor at Philippi, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*

Ay truly ! If we believe, that He came into the world to save those who believe on Him, we shall indeed be saved. You know that He took upon Himself all our sins, and blotted them out with his precious blood ; that He has covered us with the robe of his righteousness, that there is no longer any room for fear, being well persuaded that, if *He is for us, none shall be against us*, nor have power to snatch us out of his hands. This is what those miserable practices cannot do, which are purely of human invention, and which are mostly performed negligently, or from habit.

If we believe in the Lord Jesus, we shall be humble, mild, patient, charitable, and ready to help all around us ; being fully persuaded that we ourselves require indulgence from others. In short, if we believe in the Lord Jesus, we

* Acts xvi. 31.

shall be enabled to practise every virtue, because "all things are possible to him that believeth."* We shall then no longer do the works of the flesh, which are, says St. Paul, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like ; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."†

"The fruits of the Spirit," says the same apostle, "are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."‡

What glorious tidings are these that proclaim salvation through faith in Jesus Christ ! O, that I were able, my dear readers, to impress them on your inmost souls, and make your humbled and contrite hearts hear the same words, that our Lord and Saviour addressed when on earth to the sick woman : "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole ; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."§

* Mark ix. 23.

† Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

‡ Gal. v. 22, 23.

§ Mark v. 34.

And again—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."* All you, my dear friends, who read these lines, rich or poor, great or small, consider what good tidings are here announced to you—salvation upon earth! Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I am chief. It is not *my* word, that I announce to you, it is the *word of God*; and I do it with the Gospel in my hand; and as St. Paul says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."†

Such are the grand truths which God has announced to us. They are found in every page of Scripture. You have but to believe this written testimony, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life through his name.‡ Since Scripture is the only infallible source, whence we are to draw all our instruction; since it is there, and there only, that we find all that we are to believe and to hope; I cannot conclude, without saying

* Mark xvi. 15. † Gal. i. 8. ‡ St. John xx. 31.

a few words more on this subject. The Bible is a faithful preacher, which we may consult at all times ; but as many persons have imbibed prejudices against this divine book, and consider it as insufficient and obscure, I will try to combat these two errors, by showing, from many testimonies, that the Bible is sufficient to direct us in the way of salvation, without the help of tradition ; and that it is so clear, that all Christians are under the obligation of reading and of studying it.

I say 1st, that the Bible is *sufficient* of itself, and that it is not necessary to search tradition for the rule of faith. To reject this truth, would be to forsake the clear waters of Siloam for the stinking waters of Egypt ; and to deserve the reproach which the Saviour of the world addressed to the Jews : “ In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men ; for ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”*

If tradition were necessary, it would be, because we wanted something to complete our religious instruction, to strengthen our faith, and confirm our hope. But all this we find in the holy

* Mark vii. 7, 8, 9.

Scriptures. "Is it necessary," says St. Chrysostom, "to teach any truth, to refute any error, to rebuke any vice, to recommend any virtue, to give counsel, or to exhort, or to do anything else, which is necessary to salvation ; we find all in the Holy Scriptures, which, as St. Paul says, are able to make us wise unto salvation, by faith in Jesus Christ."*

Holy Scripture, is so entirely sufficient in itself, and has so little need of tradition, that "it is from this only source of truth," says a bishop of Lectoure, "that we can draw the pure rules of christian morality, as well as the doctrines of our religion ; and it is by this touchstone that we ought to examine our faith and our life."

Hence, I conclude with him, that everything that does not emanate from this divine testimony can be nothing but an absurd fable, sprung from the imagination of man ; and for which we should feel nothing but hatred and contempt ; because it can only cause us to deviate from the right way.

But what is most worthy of admiration, and strongly shows the wisdom of the Lord, who in his love has given us this rule of conduct, is that the Holy Scriptures are so varied, so rich,

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

that human wisdom has only the fatal privilege left it, of extinguishing this divine lamp, a lamp which leads us in the paths of truth, by showing us at every step, Him upon whom our hopes are founded. In fact, there is no *one* doctrine which men have built upon tradition, that is not in contradiction with the Scriptures. For instance: Is the invocation of the saints to be defended? But Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is our *only* Mediator:* that none can go to the Father, but *by Him*.†

Is the use of meat on certain days to be forbidden? But Jesus Christ tells us, that it is not that which enters into the mouth, that defiles the man.‡

St. Paul says, “whatever is sold in the shambles that eat;”§ and in his first Epistle to Timothy, he predicts, that “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, taught by impostors full of hypocrisy, whose conscience is blackened with crimes, forbidding marriage and the use of meats.” ||

Are pilgrimages to certain spots to be esta-

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. † John xiv. 6. ‡ Matt. xv. 11.

§ 1 Cor. x. 25.

|| 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.

blished? But Jesus Christ says, speaking to the woman of Samaria, "Woman, believe me the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father; but the time cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit, and they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." *

Think well of this ye superstitious women, who go on pilgrimages to Scelles, to Echeil, to Montserrat, as if God could be better worshipped there than elsewhere. St. Paul says, "I will that men pray *everywhere*." †

Moreover, tradition presents so much uncertainty that, to venture to make use of it, we must be deprived of all other resource; for what is tradition? Reports, which in passing from one generation to another, become magnified and distorted, as may be seen by the fables of Pagan mythology, which are evidently a corruption of the truth.

But why stop to consider human testimony? Has not the Eternal declared his will in terms sufficiently strong, when He speaks by his Prophets, saying, "Every word of God is pure, He

* John iv. 21, 23, 24.

† 1 Tim. ii. 8.

is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto his words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." *

"Walk not," He says again, "in the ways of your fathers, neither keep their customs. I am the Lord your God, keep my commandments."

After these declarations, as solemn as they are authentic, I ask you, where is the man who would dare to raise the destructive edifice of human tradition by the side of the Scriptures? Would he not resemble the foolish man spoken of in the Gospel, "who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof."† Or rather, would he not expose himself to all that is written in the book of the Prophecy against those, who are guilty of a like outrage upon the Word of God? For, says St. John, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book; If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."‡ And elsewhere we read, "what

* Prov. xxx, 5, 6. † Matt. vii. 26, 27. ‡ Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

thing soever I command thee, observe and do it; *thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*"* St. Paul was well persuaded of the sufficiency of Scripture, when, writing to the Galatians, he reproves them for having lent an ear to the discourse of those, who preached doctrines conformable to the tradition of men. "Though we," he says, "or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed†.

Well then, beloved reader, this same Gospel that St. Paul preached to the Galatians, I now preach to you, and if any one, if an angel from heaven, preach any other, hear him not; for he is an impostor, and the truth is not in his mouth. I do not wish you to believe upon my word; I say always with St. Paul, "*Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*"‡ You have the Holy Scriptures, weigh then in that infallible balance every word of men; and, if they speak not according to the law and the testimony, be sure that there is no light in them.§ If I do not announce the Gospel to you in its purity, such as it is contained in the Scriptures, do not listen

* Deut. xii. 32.

† 1. Thess. v. 21.

‡ Gal. i. 8, 9.

§ Isaiah viii. 20.

to me; but if I tell you the good tidings, the good part that Mary chose;* if, in a word, I preach to you Jesus Christ, and Him crucified for the salvation of mankind, attend to what I say, for my words are the words of eternal life.

If any condemn you, and remind you of the decisions of the Popes and Councils, answer them boldly and without fear, that at the last great day of judgment, you will not be judged by the decisions of Popes and Councils, but by the word of God, which He has transmitted to us in the Holy Scriptures.†

Let us now examine whether the objection that the Scriptures are obscure, be better founded. To think that the Scriptures are obscure, and cannot be understood in the present day without the aid of tradition, is an error that is most pernicious to the progress of truth. This error gains the more credence, because unfortunately there are men who use their utmost efforts to establish it in the minds of the people, and thus to deprive them of the most precious of all treasures. While the friends of our Lord and

* Luke x. 42.

† John xii. 48.

Saviour Jesus Christ are anxious to establish societies everywhere, for the purpose of propagating the Word of God, these poor blinded mortals employ all their credit, and all their influence, to paralyse the good effects of them. While Christians of all ranks, and all denominations, favour the propagation of the Bible to the utmost of their ability, there are others, who labour with an inconceivable ardour to arrest its course, under the fallacious pretext that the Scriptures are obscure, and that it would be making the most fatal present to the people, to put it into their hands.

I do not deny that there are some things in the Scriptures hard to be understood;* but, that is owing to the blindness of our understandings. The Lord has chosen that there should be some things above the capacity of man, that he may humble himself before Him, and adore the depth of his designs. But the language of the sacred writings is, nevertheless, clear enough for the pride of the human heart to rise against it, and to reject it. "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?"† But if there are some things in the Holy Scriptures hard to be understood, there are others which are not so : and for the sake of these at

* 2 Peter iii. 16.

† John iv. 60.

least, the reading of the sacred book ought to be permitted to all without distinction ; for all men are required to know, and practise, what the Scriptures plainly declare to be necessary to salvation : and that with so much the more reason, inasmuch as, that which is known, ordinarily leads to that which is not known. For example, it is very plainly said, that Christ is the end of the law, and that none can be saved but by Him :* that we are justified by faith of Christ, not by the works of the law ; for by the works of the law, shall no flesh be justified. †

No, no, the Bible has not that obscurity in it, which the Romish Priests attribute to it. The Bible is like a great tree, laden with the most exquisite fruit, from the top to the bottom. Should we not then deem him a madman, who refused to gather the fruit within his reach, because he could not reach that which was on the branches above him ? Such is the man who refuses to read the Bible, because there are some things in it which he cannot comprehend.

The Scripture is a vast universe, where are steep mountains for the robust and vigorous man, and agreeable valleys for children and women ;

* Rom. x. 4.

† Gal. ii. 16.

for those who are infirm, and aged ; and for all, in short, who have not strength to climb the rocks.

Nay, when it was the will of our Sovereign Law-giver to impart the knowledge of Himself to all men, He showed his wisdom in thus suiting Himself to the capacity of all. To deny this truth, and obstinately to refuse the people the permission to read the Scriptures, would be nothing less than depriving them of "*a lamp to their feet and a light to their paths,*" and more surely leading them into the obscure and tortuous labyrinth of the tradition of men.

Ye Roman doctors, who forbid the reading of the Bible to the people, permit me to say to you with the author of the work entitled "*Catholicisme aux Abois :*"

"If the Bible is obscure, why forbid the people to read it? You need fear nothing ; if they cannot comprehend it, they will soon be tired of a book that they cannot understand ; or they will come to you for an explanation of it. Is it not, on the contrary, because this book is clear, *too* clear, that you forbid their reading it? Do you not rather fear that they may see what you would conceal, and that they may learn what you would not teach? When you are seen to

insert some portions of the New Testament in your mass books, and leave out others, we are quite authorised in thinking so."*

Let all then, without exception, read the Bible, let them meditate upon it, let the words of it be graven deeply in their hearts ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.†

The Scriptures may, nevertheless, be obscure to some persons, but they will only be so to those who, instead of receiving them in their simple and natural sense, darken them by human interpretations, and are thus at great pains to dig a pit for themselves, to their eternal perdition. " For," says St. Paul, " if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds."‡ But, dear reader, ought the wickedness of these ministers of his, to outweigh the Word of God, which has said, " Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."§

If the Scriptures are so obscure, so dangerous for the people, whence comes it that the apostle

* " Le Catholicisme aux Abois," par M. Roussel.

† Rom. i. 16. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. § John v. 39.

of the Gentiles recommends all the Christians of a church to read the Epistles he addressed to them? and "when this epistle," 'says he to the Colossians, "is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans."*—The same apostle, writing also to the Thessalonians, says to them, "I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."†

Will you say, that it was to the learned, to the wise according to this world, that St. Paul wrote. Nay, hear his own answer: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called."‡ But doubtless you will say, there was some one to explain the difficult passages to the ignorant? There is not a word of the kind. Moreover, gentlemen of the Romish church, who hinders you, I would ask, from explaining the difficult passages to the ignorant? But pray, do not take from them the pleasure of finding for themselves, what it has pleased God to put within their reach. So then, my beloved readers, since Holy Scripture is sufficient to lead us to salvation, and so clear, that we are all, without distinction, under

* Col. iv. 16. † 1 Thess. v. 27. ‡ 1 Cor i. 26.

an obligation to read it, study it, and meditate upon it; read it all of you, for being given by the inspiration of God, it is “profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

Fathers and mothers! read it in the evening when, seated by your firesides, surrounded by your beloved children, you rest after the labours of the day. Lay aside that idle conversation, which is too often mingled with slander and calumny. Let it give place to the study of the Word of God, and the blessing of God will rest upon you. And do you, my young friends! read the New Testament, and then, instead of those pernicious songs, which destroy the soul, we shall hear psalms and hymns of praise to the Lord Jesus Christ!

Men and women of all ages, and of all conditions, read the Scripture! fear not that it will make you stumble in the way of salvation. It is the armour of God, by which you may resist all the attacks of your enemies. It is the helmet of salvation. It is the sword of the spirit, against which the fiery darts of Satan’s malice will be

* 2 Tim. ii. 16.

hurled in vain.* Let it not be wrested from you any more than the first Christians allowed it to be. Keep it, as the gift of God to all the family of mankind. It is the food of our souls, the lamp which should give light to our paths,† that we may not walk in the darkness of error and death. None, but the enemies of our souls and of the Gospel, can say that the Bible is obscure, and that it is a dangerous book in the hands of the laity. But whoever has at heart to make known Christ, and Him crucified for the redemption of man, will exhort you, will conjure you, as I myself exhort and conjure you, to meditate on the Word of God, for by it *ye think ye have eternal life*. Make it the rule of your faith and conduct, receive with reverence all that is contained in this holy book, and reject as fable, all that is not supported by its divine testimony ; for, says St. Paul, “ If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings.” ‡ Look not to those who

* Ephes. vi. 17. † Ps. cxix, 105. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 3,

preach the word to you, but observe whether they preach it purely ; for there are bad labourers in the Lord's vineyard. Be not less careful for your salvation, than you are for your temporal affairs. Prove all things ; and if any man preach what is not in the Scriptures, receive it not ; because it is the alloy, that man would mix with the pure gold of the sanctuary.

May God, whom I daily call upon, through the intercession of his Son Jesus Christ, who is the way, and the truth, and the life, guard, preserve, bless, and keep you from rejecting his word, to the loss of your souls ! And may the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, one only God, blessed for ever, be with you, dear reader, and with your family !

VII.

QUESTIONS PUT TO THE ABBE' ORTIE, BISHOP OF PAMIERS.

My Lord ; 1st. Is it true, or is it not, that the worship of images, so strongly combated by St. Epiphanius, and by St. Augustin, triumphed for the first time only at the 2nd Council of Nice, held under the influence of the legates of the Pope, and the Empress Irene, in the year 789.

Is it true, or is it not, that the second Council of Francfort, assembled by Charlemagne in 794, opposed with all its force the decision of the Council of Nice, and condemned the worship of images?

Is it true, or is it not, that the Council of Trent condemned the Council of Francfort, and maintained the worship of images, which was decreed by the second Council of Nice? If that is true,—and it is true,—the consequence is, that the worship of images is a novelty introduced into the Church of Christ: therefore, we Christians put it from us; we will have none of it.

2nd. Is it true, or is it not, that you *worship* images? If you say "Yes," you are idolaters; if you say "No," you are heretics; for in the second Council of Nice, we read that those, who say I venerate images, but I do not worship them, are condemned as heretics by the holy Father Anastasius; and in the synodical letter of the council we read, "We believe that we ought undoubtedly to worship images, and to salute them: and our holy council anathematizes all those who are not of this opinion, but stand in doubt or fear on the subject." (Collection from the Councils, by Labbe and Cossard.)

To relieve you from this dilemma, I will not require you to make the distinction, your theologians have made between *doulia*, *hyperdoulia*, and *latría*; I reject it at once, as contrary to the principle which tells us, that *where the law makes no distinction, we ought not to make any*; besides which our Lord made no such distinction, since he made it not to Satan, when he asked Him to worship him.

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,” said our Saviour.*

3rd. Is it true, or is it not, that it was Pasca-
cius Radberd, a monk of Corbie, who in a dis-
course upon the body and blood of our Lord
Jesus Christ, in the year 881, first taught the
doctrine of the real presence, and that it was
not till the Council of Lateran, held in 1215,
that this dogma was first established? If this
is true,—and it is true,—it necessarily follows,
that our fathers must have been for 1215 years,
or at least 881 years, in perfect ignorance of
this dogma: it follows, consequently, that it is
not apostolic, and that it is a novelty introduced
into the church of God: for this reason we
Christians reject it with all our hearts.

4th. Is it true, or is it not, that the members

* Matt. iv. 10.

of your Church, and even your priests, do not in these days believe that when they communicate, they eat a living man ?

5th. Is it true, or is it not, that confession to a priest was ordained, for the first time, at the fourth Council of Lateran, held in 1215 ; and that it was then decreed, that those Christians who refused to submit to it, should be deprived of admittance into the Church during life, and of the rites of sepulture after death ?

If this is true,—and it is true,—it follows that our fathers lived 1215 years without being obliged to confess to a priest. It also follows that this practice is not apostolic ; that it is an invention and ordinance of man ; that it is a novelty introduced into the Christian Church : therefore we Christians reject it with all our might, and we will have nothing to do with it, because it only hardens the sinner in his habits of sin ; it throws families into confusion ; it sows discord between a man and his wife ; and between the wife and her husband ; between brother and sister ; father and child ; and it disturbs the peace of parishes and of states.

6th. Is it true, or is it not, that neither St. Peter, St. Paul, nor St. John, ever said to a sin-

ner, “*I, Peter, Paul, or John, absolve thee?*” If it is true, that neither the one nor the other ever said this, why, my lord, should you say it, even if you had their power to do so? and why do you say it, when you have it not?

7th. Is it true, or is it not, that your doctrine of purgatory was not decreed by the Romish Church till 1438, at the Council of Florence, and that the Council of Trent afterwards hastily confirmed it during its last session? If that be true,—and it *is* true,—it follows that fourteen centuries had elapsed, before our fathers had an idea that there was a purgatory, or brought their money to the bankers of souls (*viz.* the priests): it follows, further, that this doctrine is the invention of man; that it is not apostolic; that it is a novelty, introduced into the Church of Jesus Christ: therefore we Christians renounce it; we will have none of it.

A few more questions, my Lord.

Is it true, or is it not, that in the eleventh century the Pope and the bishops caused those Christians, who proclaimed upon the testimony

of the Gospel that salvation is of grace, to be burnt at Orleans ?

Is it true, or is it not, that in the twelfth century again, the Pope and the bishops caused all who, upon the testimony of the Gospel, preached salvation by grace, to be committed to the flames ?

Is it true, or is it not, that in the thirteenth century the Pope and the bishops put thousands to death, in Italy, France, and Spain, who upon the testimony of the Word of God, preached that salvation is gratuitous ?

Is it true, or is it not, that in the fourteenth century the Pope and the bishops caused the Lollards, and Wickliffites to be burnt, for maintaining, upon the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, the sole merits of the Saviour ?

Is it true, or is it not, that the Pope and bishops lighted the fifteenth century with the flames of those piles, upon which the Lollards of England laid down their lives, for asserting that God gives eternal life gratuitously in Jesus ;—that John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, resigned their souls to God in the midst of the flames, into which they were cast by the Council of Constance, and that because they affirmed, accord-

ing to the testimony of the Gospel, that we are saved by grace, through faith ?

Is it true, or is it not, that Pope Gregory VII. obliged the Emperor Henry IV. to pass the Alps, in the winter of 1077, to supplicate him on his knees to take off the excommunication that he had fulminated against him ; and that he left this poor prince with naked feet, and head uncovered, and with only a coarse cloth over his shoulders, three days in the open air, at the door of the castle of Canusium, before he would give him an audience ?

Is it true, or is it not, that Pope Alexander III., in 1167, absolved the Germans from their oath of fidelity towards the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, exciting them to revolt against him ; and that, when that emperor went humbly to ask his pardon, the proud pontiff put his foot upon his neck, repeating from the ninety-first psalm these words : “ Super ferorem leonem et aspidem incedes, conculcabis juvenem leonem et draconem.” (Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot) ?

Is it true, or is it not, that Pope Celestine III., in 1191, kicked the crown from the head of the Emperor Henry VI., which he had just placed there, to teach him that the sovereign pontiff had the right to give crowns and to cast them off?

If all this is true,—and it is all true,—I cannot terminate these few lines better than by entreating you, my lord bishop, to meditate on the words that St. Stephen addressed to the ungodly synagogue: “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and the murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.” (Acts of the Apostles, vii. 51, 52, 53.)

One word more to the priests.

And you, priests of Rome, my old colleagues, you, who know, as well as I do, where the truth is to be found;

You, who feel, and even see, that the time given to the Church of Rome to finish her iniquity is drawing to an end ;

You, who know that there is but one sole and eternal sacrifice, offered by Jesus Christ *alone*, who is the true and only sacrificing priest ;

You, who know that the Bishop of Pamiers, and the Archbishop of Toulouse, believe that the mass is not necessary to the salvation of souls, because they authorise you not to celebrate mass on Sundays, if the Municipal Council will not vote you the sum of two hundred francs for the celebration ;

You, who know that we are justified only by faith in Jesus Christ, and that by grace alone we are saved ;

You, who know that after this life there are but two places, heaven and hell ;

You, who know that your ceremonies are unprofitable, and your masses without efficacy ;

You, who know that you fulfil the functions of your ministry with pain, disgust, and weariness, unless there is a good "casuel" attached to them ;

You, who know that you pay no regard to the sacerdotal ornaments, which the Pope and the

bishops have imposed on you, and which they borrowed from Pagans, Jews, and idolaters ;

You, who know that you have no power to absolve nor to condemn ;

You, who know that you make a shameful traffic of souls ;

You, who know that Jesus Christ is not present with us corporeally ;

You, who know that you forget your consecrated hosts, and leave them in the tabernacle for six months in the year, and that you afterwards find this god of paste eaten up by worms ;

You, who do not observe the law of fasting, even on Good Fridays ; you, in fine, to sum up all in one word, who believe in none of the dogmas that the Pope and the bishops have imposed on the consciences of men, but who believe in Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel ;—

Priests ! leave the house of bondage ;* shake off the odious yoke under which you are groaning ; break the chains which enslave you. Take off those filthy garments that a strange sovereign, the Pope, has dipped in the blood of our fathers ; and the angel of the Lord will say to you, (as he did to Joshua the high priest,)

* Exod. xx. 2.

“ Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” *

Priests of Rome ! leave the house of bondage ; for thus saith the Lord, “ In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee, and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages ; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, go forth ; to them that are in darkness, behold the light.” †

Priests ! leave the house of bondage ; enter freely and willingly into possession of the liberty, which Jesus Christ has purchased for you with his blood. Like the twelve apostles let us go forth amongst the people, without any other support than the holy word of Him, who moved by his great love for us was willing to be born in a manger and die upon the cross ; and this holy word will again dwell upon our lips in all its primitive force.

Priests ! leave the house of bondage. But they will persecute you—assuredly they will persecute you. I know it, because Jesus Christ predicts it, and his predictions must be accom-

* Zech. iii. 4.

† Isaiah xlix. 8. 9.

plished. But, "be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear Him who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him." *

They will persecute you. Yes, certainly they will persecute you. Your enemies shall be even those of your own house.† I know it by my own experience. But after the example of St. Paul, who gloried in the stripes that the priests of the synagogue gave him, and the chains with which they loaded him, so do I also glory in the injuries, the follies, and the oppressions, which the priests of Rome have heaped upon me. "But blessed are ye," says the Saviour of the world, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."‡

Priests! come out of Babylon, (the Church of Rome,) that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.§

* Luke xii. 4, 5.

† Matt. x. 36.

‡ Matt. v. 11, 12.

§ Rev. xviii. 4.

Come out ! wait not till the last day ; for then all the iniquities of Rome will be discovered. Woe to the priests ! who in that day are found in the train of the Whore ; for they shall not cease to curse the womb that bare them, and the paps that they sucked !

THE END.

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